

'Negative' Newport pay the price

WYCOMBE WANDERERS manager Brian Lee blamed Newport's tactics for causing the Fourth Division club's F.A. Cup upset on the notorious slopes of Loakes Park.

Wycombe's great record

MR. ROWLANDS, of High Wycombe, Bucks, writes:
HAVING been a GOAL reader for nearly four years and enjoyed every

minute of its vast coverage of Soccer, my biggest thrill came with the Dec. 1 issue when you reflected on Wycombe Wanderers' great F.A. Cup win over Newport County.

Could I please inform your readers of some interesting facts about this club.

Attendances at home matches would make most Fourth Division clubs and some Third Division clubs blush. But what I believe puts them on a pedestal is their conduct record and the number of top class players they have lost to professional clubs.

In 30 league, cup and friendly matches, they haven't had a player sent off or booked. So if you want to see good, clean football, come to Loakes Park.

Now the first class players the Wanderers have "lost" over the past few years: Viv Busby (Luton, now Fulham), Peter Sudaby (Blackpool), Paul Fuchillo (Blackpool), Micky Mellow (Portsmouth), John Delaney (Bournemouth), Alan Gane (Brentford, now Hereford), Kenny Swain (Chelsea) and Dave Price (Leicester).

• A record that any club, whether professional or amateur, would be extremely proud of.

"They played only two men up with four stretched across the middle. And it was disastrous," said Lee after his side's 3-1 win before a 6,888 crowd.

"They tried to turn this to 4-3-3 in the second-half when they were struggling but you just can't do this in the middle of a game. You can't turn off a tap and start again. The whole essence of this game, whether you're professional or amateur, is to enjoy it and attack. And if we lose that essence we might as well pack it in. That's what I'd do if anyone ever told me to play negative football with two men up front. I don't go along with it at all."

Lee said that Newport could not excuse their defeat on the Wycombe slope. He says: "After all they'd watched us three or four times home and away so they knew what to expect. And we could argue, that had we been drawn to play at Newport, that they have a considerable slope on their pitch.

"They're professionals. They can make too much of that. They must have been prepared for the slope but I can honestly say that we don't utilise it. If we became slope conscious it would be no good at all."

Lee admitted that he had learned little from his spying mission to Newport the previous week because their opponents on that day, Darlington, were "woeful opposition".



Congratulations all round from the crowd for Tony Brothers (front) and Mick Holifield after Wycombe's memorable 3-1 triumph on Saturday.